NOTES.

Peace Possibilities.

During the past month we have been treated to two discussions on peace possibilities: one in the House of Commons and one in the Duma. The former was initiated by Philip Snowden, who, in an eloquent speech, asked whether there was no alternative to the colossal expenditure of men and money, and whether all that it was hoped to gain by continuing the war could not be as easily obtained now. He asked the Government to state its terms of peace. The reply by the Prime Minister, in his usual equivocal phraseology, was a repetition of his former ambiguous statements about crushing Prussian militarism, restoring and indemnifying small nationalities, etc., etc. M. Stasovski, in the Duma, said the same thing. "Prussianism," he said, "must be crushed for ever; otherwise all the sacrifices of the Allies would be in vain." What balderdash! And they know it. For while Asquith speaks about crushing militarism, etc., Bismarck gives the show away by declaring that Germany must never be allowed to raise her head in the commercial world. Which, of course, is the real object, but not too likely to foster the patriotic passion which inspires men to gladly give their lives, and without which the war would not last another day. In any case, militarism can never be crushed by militarism, for on it rests the strength of the State; and a more sinister and dangerous militarism is crushing us here whilst we are supposed to be crushing the Prussian variety. The war will cease and militarism end when the workers, realising their power, rise up and declare themselves unwilling to assist further in the prosecution of the war. If Mr. Snowden and his friends are sincere in their aims, the must be that those to whom they are appealing are hardly likely to call a halt on emotional grounds. The halt will be called when the workers halt.

Revival of the Inquisition.

Never before have we had such a spectacle of humbug and hypocrisy as that presented by the Tribunals to hear appeals for exemptions from those liable for military service. To say that the Matrimonial Court is to put it mildly, it is mad, is a disgusting example of despotism in its most tyrannical and brutal form. Young men, with or without genuine conscientious objections, placing their faith in the holy pledges of the Government that they would be fairly treated, submit to a cross-examination upon their objections, and are bullied, browbeaten, insulted, and harassed by stupid questions, made to answer irrelevant inquiries, and swept aside to join without any of their points being touched upon. We were told that the Tribunals were to be civil courts, but it appears that, for example, at the City Tribunal, the military representative, Major Rothschild, has more to say than any one else, and is clearly the most important man present. It is not possible to give even a few of the more glaring cases of brutal treatment exercised by these inquisitors, whose stock question appears to be: "What would you do if the Germans were at your gate?" This surely touches the depth of stupidity, and such queries could equally stupid rejoinder. But, judging the Tribunals by their first week's working, it is apparent that the best course for the man who has made up his mind not to serve is to simply ignore them. We never had much faith in Ministerial promises; we have none now.

"But we have three Labour members in the Government!"

"We have. And at the Bar of History how will they or their friends say that these assaults upon our civil liberties only became serious in number and in intensity after the Labour representatives had entered the Government?"

-Glasgow Forward.

In the Name of Liberty!

In support of our distrust of the Tribunals we might quote the Star of February 25th, wherein they ask for a "square deal."

"It will be a long time before the mingled blundering and duplicity of the Conscription era in England is forgotten. Take the widow's son. Mr. Walter Long said in the House of Commons on January 18: 'Nobody desires to take the only son of his mother who is a widow and looks to her son for maintenance and support and relies upon him practically for everything in the world.' The Tribunals under the new War Office screw are in fact taking the only sons of widows who are dependent upon them or only granting a brief postponement. Yesterday Mr. Walter Long sent out an official circular in which he suggested to the Tribunals that the case must be considered as a case of serious hardship' might be caused to the widow if her son were killed, but only what hardship might be caused to her if he were called up—which, as an exercise in casuistry, will take a great deal of beating. All this time we are still hidden to 'trust the Tribunals.' . . . If this is what Mr. Long and the Government mean by 'trusting the Tribunals,' it is a curious method of showing their confidence. What the public are demanding is a 'square deal,' as Mr. Roosevelt once put it, and they seem very unlikely to get it."

The widow's son is not the only victim. There are hundreds of cases of men with businesses being told to sell up, and given a month or six weeks in which to do it, which spells absolute ruin. So apart from the man opposed to the war and militarism, who expects little sympathy for holding unpopular opinions, the new inquisition is outdistancing its predecessor. How long, we wonder, will the infamy be permitted to exist? And in the interests of a War of Liberty!

The Soldier's Reward.

"A grateful country will reward you" was the message given to Britain's soldiers in the past. It is history how they were rewarded. We have seen men with street organs, in the workhouse, or reduced to beggary as a reward for their services. But that was in the past. When the great cry went forth for men for this war, they were to be treated in a manner worthy of their great sacrifice. But how have our rulers carried out their promise? "A Guardsman invalided out of the Army stated at a London police court that he had been discharged for frostbite, and was not receiving any pension or allowance. Up to the end of 1915, twelve thousand men were invalided out of the Army without a pension. The explanation of the Government is simple. "These men were weak or defective when they entered, and the strain of military service has produced the illness for which they are discharged; and if pensions are to be allowed, the medical examination must be made more thorough, which would mean a greater increase of receipts and less men for the Army." This is in effect the reply of the Government. It carries its own commentary.

Patriotism and Profit.

The scandal of the exorbitant freight charges and gigantic profits of the shipping companies has again been filling our daily Press. It has cropped up periodically since the war began, and it still stands where it did. The Government readily finds a plausible excuse, and go so far as to take control of the shipping (but not the profits). They refer in glowing terms to the patriotic manner in which these carriage crews have assisted the Government in the matter of transport, but it is plain to see that the shipping companies, like the capitalists generally, are making hay while the sun shines. They are taking the opportunity to fill their coffers, and never mind at whose expense. It happens that, as usual, it is the workers who
are paying in increased cost of everything; yet when they ask for an increase of 5% on their usual 10%, the cry that is raised is suggestive of the revolution. They are depicted as mercenary creatures, unloving, unkind, and on the look out for a fight, but anxious to make all they can. Yet where is the difference between their constituents and other classes, and an increase to 7½% per ton on coal to Genoa, which formerly was carried for 7½%? The only difference is the modesty of the workers' demands. We do not suggest that the Government should take complete control of the shipping, but we do suggest that the workers should be equally patriotic and go in for the whole hog. When the workers are filled with the same kind of patriotism as that inspiring the shipping magnates, we shall be in for another kind of war—and it will not be in Flanders or Mesopotamia.

"Economy in all things," says the Premier, must be rigidly exercised by the nation if we are to pull through. A wise saying no doubt, for all recognize the value of economy, whether in one's own house or in the state. Even the paintings of art are warning them not to make such extravagant presents of their portfolios. The value of the great art works, of course, is intangible; the value of the local pictures is measurable. As the placid inquisitions of men like Asquith are entirely lost when their actions are balanced with their words. He is getting £3,000 a year, and he says, "I mean to continue taking it." But as an earnest of his endeavour to assist the nation, he and his colleagues have agreed to accept 30 per cent of their salaries in war bonds—5½ per cent interest. Economy on those lines is easy, but what of the old-age pensioner with 5s. per week and the value of a sovereign reduced to between 10s. and 12s. 6d. Even the papers of the wealthy are warning them not to make such extravagant presents of their portfolios. The value of the great art works, of course, is intangible; the value of the local pictures is measurable. As the placid inquisitions of men like Asquith are entirely lost when their actions are balanced with their words. He is getting £3,000 a year, and he says, "I mean to continue taking it." But as an earnest of his endeavour to assist the nation, he and his colleagues have agreed to accept 30 per cent of their salaries in war bonds—5½ per cent interest. Economy on those lines is easy, but what of the old-age pensioner with 5s. per week and the value of a sovereign reduced to between 10s. and 12s. 6d. Even the papers of the wealthy are warning them not to make such extravagant presents of their portfolios. The value of the great art works, of course, is intangible; the value of the local pictures is measurable.

The Northcliffe Press, having played a heroic part in the agitation in favour of Conscription for single men, is now urging the Government to go "the whole hog." No sooner had the Military Service Bill became law than the Military Correspondent of the Times started shrieking for more. "Labour," he writes, "so far as it was represented at Bristol, has made a marginal note not to quit its post to capitulate in favour of repeal. . . . The opponents of the Act, having made their protest, fall into line, and the general order is 'Steam ahead!'" The Daily News, commenting on these lines and endeavouring to square the circle of expediency, declares that these sentences represent either a fundamental and inexorable ignorance of the attitude of Labour or an attempt to use a grossly unfair advantage. It is partly right and partly wrong. The Daily News to make excuses for its contemporary's blunt truthfulness. The murder is out, and the docility of Labour not to be rewarded. It seems to be no mystery, with still more Conscription. Labour, through the instrumentality of its leaders, has fallen an easy victim, and the capitalist Press does well to swagger and talk of "Steam ahead!" Labour having once been frightened, it is likely to have to a good many more wrong turnings before finding the right road again. But if Labour, the wooden-headed, can but grasp the full significance of this "Steam ahead!" it might assist a little towards the speedy finding of the lost road.

The voice of national calling, and certainly in a very high-pitched tune. The eternal wrongs it suffers—this is the burden of its cry. And here and there in the papers, scattered seemingly in unguarded moments, we find the truth—naked and unashamed—without raiment or disguise. "The more single men," we read, "as opposed to married men, who can be utilised for the Army, the fewer homes we shall have broken up and the fewer changes house property will undergo." And this is followed up in a delightful way over Sir Alfred Mond's Bill, which, if passed, would enable any man called up for naval or military service to apply to the Courts for relief from contracts when he is unable to meet the liabilities they involve. The measure is to be recommended, as it does not cost the Exchequer £50 a year in London and £30 in the provinces. Those who are acquainted with the past history of this worthy Member will be surprised at his manner of recommending it. It used to be a roar of rage when the wall became something like a roar when the property owners and representatives of insurance companies, who also wanted to be Members of Parliament, attacked the Bill. They called the proposals immoral, and said that the proposed monomaniac was mere robbery under legislative form. And, of course, although they are in Parliament ostensibly to guard the interests of their constituents, a vital matter such as this being so nearly interfering with their profits must be tackled and their active opposition presented with all energy, and they will no doubt successfully defend their rights. But we can only be sufficiently confident to believe in our precious system of representative Government can remain timely upon the moral and truly adorn the tale.

A bus conductor who had been a victim of a Zeppelin raid was, on February 28, up against those amiable twins, Patriotism and Profit. And very incorrigible they proved. As he was injured whilst on duty, he claimed compensation from his employers, the London General Omnibus Company. The victim lost his left eye and had since been employed by the Company at lower wage. Patriotism and Profit proved sympathetic but obdurate, and dismissed the man's claim, holding that he was not exposed to special risk. But that lowered wage is clear evidence that where the two Fs come into conflict, it always the former that goes under.

Robert Blatchford has been telling the readers of the Weekly Dispatch that the State should be "a thing of luxury and think nationally," he declares. This alone will save the Empire from red ruin. All-round State control alone will overcome the crisis. To that end the State shall provide Navy is a State-managed service, so all else should be State-owned, State-controlled. But he overlooks one important point, that since the war we have been State-owned and State-controlled, but not the State and why they should become interchangeable terms, and even a person of most obtuse understanding can see in the State the hateful institution of oppression it really is. No, Robert, your illusory illustration of the State-managed Navy is just a little unfortunate, and we note you forebear to speak of a State-managed Army, having some recollection of a Dardanelles expedition perhaps, but no sensible person will dream of thinking nationally along the lines you indicate, for the robber State has bound us, gagged us, and robbed us, and we do not propose to turn the other cheek.

The sentence of six months' imprisonment passed on Mrs. Nellie Best is a particularly infamous one, and should call for all protests from all liberty-lovers. As honorary secretary of the Women's Anti-Conscription League, she had published certain leaflets against recruiting and conscription. Her spirited defence is one that should appeal to all Anarchists, and her high courage in confessing that she had done her utmost to prejudice recruiting since the outbreak of war is particularly inspiring. "She was proud," she declared, "that she had succeeded in keeping hundreds of lads from enlisting. The vicious sentence, we may be sure, was only part of her unrepentant attitude, for authority is always particularly indulgent to the penitent. We congratulate her for having avoided the law and set an example which we hope will bear speedy fruit.

Under the heading "Anarchist outrages," the Daily News held forth on February 1 on the Zeppelin menace, and quoted from the Spanish paper El Pais. There is no difference," says this paper, "between Zeppelin raids and Anarchist outrages," and urges neutral nations to protest against the criminal proceedings, if only to safeguard the conquests of civilisation. This, of course, the Daily News endorses, declaring the raids "Anarchist outrages" and a denial of all law. Now, although most hirelings of the Press know perfectly well what Anarchists stands for, yet it always suits their purpose to traduce it. Thus the murder of the Archduke and Archduchess Ferdinand of Austria in June, 1914, was blazoned abroad as the work of Anarchists, though subsequent facts proved it to have been perpetrated by Serbian Nationalists. The Daily News, we suppose, has never been in a vital matter such as these aeroplane attacks by the British. These outrages, far from being a denial of all law, are the last word in international law which successive and the conference of States does not agree. The German, with the connivance of other States, cannot organise for murder and pretend to be surprised when such incidents take place. They rightly fall into the category of war, and war we know is hell. It is the last word in capitalist exploitation and "civilisation."
THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT KILL.

This is a true story—a tragedy of real life in France. It was told to me by Richard Schuyler, an American writer, by an old schoolmate at Mount Holyoke, France. Mr. Schuyler related it to the "American Magazine."

"This is the story of a man who would not kill," began the old schoolmate. "You know, of course, there are two faces fresh from his three years of military service, which he had hated, with letters from mutual friends. I took him as my assistant instructor.

"He was my father. He was pale, but strong, with the pallor of too many night hours given to study. His black eyes had all the fire and piercing quality to be found in leaders in thought and argument. He was quiet, reserved, stoical and kind, and kept very much to himself. Everyone loved him—the pupils adored him. With them he was all gentleness and gaiety, but firm enough, when need be, to inspire respect and obedience. They learned rapidly under his tutelage, and I was delighted with him.

"But now came suddenly down upon us, Paul held himself aloof from all the excitement, the public meetings and speeches. The meaning that Germany's declaration of war became known to us I asked what Paul was going to do. I shall never forget the expression on his face as he looked straight into my eyes, his own gaining with the light of strong resolve, and answered:

"'I shall have nothing to do with this war!'"

"'For a moment the full import of his words did not make itself clear to me, in my turn of mind."

"'But, then, you will have to go all the same,' when the call for the reserves of your class comes,'

"He smiled gently, 'I shall have nothing to do with this war. I shall have nothing to do with this war!'

"'What do you mean, I cried, 'that you will refuse to go when France calls?'

"'Precisely,' he replied.

"'But that would be madness!' I exclaimed. 'It would be shameful! They will force you to go—we implore you not to go.'

"'Whatever do you mean, I answered, 'they cannot make me fight. It is monstrous, this war. It is the war of diplomacy and Greatness, to the benefit of the people. It is not a war of murder. I shall not commit murder for my country nor for any power on the face of the earth. That is my resolve. Let us talk of something else.'

"I was alarmed, thinking his resolution but that of a visionary who, when the time came, would go like the rest, regardless of his beliefs or creed. It seemed that I was right, for when the call came a few days later Paul was prevailed upon by his friends to present himself at the recruiting office and receive his orders. It had been arranged for him through some influential friends in Paris that he should be detailed for clerical work in the commissary department, where he would not have to fight.

"He came to me in his uniform to take leave. He told me of his expected assignment. 'For that reason alone I have submitted myself to the military system,' he said. 'I hate it all, all of it. I hate this uniform, this badge of blood and baccy—of man in his lowest, most brutal guise. I am a coward, I have sacrificed my beliefs, my ideals, to this system. But further than this I shall not go. I will not force myself to kill—no matter what they may do to me.

"Dear fellow, old friend, my father!"

"I went with him to some points of mobilization near Paris. A week later I received a postcard. He was still drilling with his regiment, but he was expecting every day to be given the position of an inspector on the commissary staff. The ensuing weeks were filled with the terror and clamour of war.

"One morning the school door opened and in walked Paul. He was dressed in his old suit of black. His face was haggard and drawn under his coat of tan, but his eyes blazed as ever with his unconquerable spirit. The children shouted with joy as they recognised him. Discipline threw aside, they clamoured about him and plied him with questions as he struggled forward to my desk and reached for my hand.

"'Silence, my little ones,' he cried. 'I have come back to teach you. Return to your places.'

"It was almost the hour of recess, so I permitted the pupils to scamper off, shouting the glad tidings of Paul's return to everyone they met on the street.

"Silently, I waited for his explanation. He looked at me, and smiled grimly.

"'It is finished,' he said. 'They tricked me. I was not given a clerical position. My regiment was ordered to the front day before yesterday. I went with them, hoping to the last that I should get the promise of a post which I had written to them. That day, and were told that the morning would find us in battle. I came away. In the confusion I was not stopped at the railroad station. I have the feeling that we shall return to the closest. This is my story in a dress. I am a teacher, not a butcher. May I stay with you as of old until they come for me? I am pledged with him in tears. I pictured the dangers of his position, the contempt and anger of his townsmen—how they would misunderstand his motives and look upon him as a traitor and coward.

"I told him he would be tried, convicted, and probably shot.

"'I know all that,' he replied. 'It is useless to argue with me. I do not want you to come to this school, I shall stay away and wait for them in my room. But I should like to be here, at my work, when they send for me.'

"I seconded a little thing to do for him, who was so determined to throw his life away for a belief, an ideal. I consented. That day he finished the afternoon session in his old capacity and then walked about the town. Where once he had been the centre of roundness and friendliness and cheerful greetings, he now met only suspicious glances and interrogation. To all questioners he replied, simply, that he had returned to teach school.

"By night all the town knew that Paul Savigny had left his regiment, renounced civil authority, and was again teaching school. The news of his return gave new and vital meaning to the existence of the school, a staff officer and closely questioned. I gave as little information as possible.

"No action was taken that night, but the next morning, while the children were in the midst of their grammar lessons Paul stood testifying at the blackboard, the expected happened. We heard the sound of feet outside the door. I sharp commanded, the ring of the little buttons on the coat, and the door was opened by a young officer.

"'Paul Savigny,' he demanded.

"'I am here, Monsieur,' answered Paul quietly from his post at the blackboard.

"'You are wanted at headquarters at once.'

"Paul reached up to the top of the blackboard and wrote, in his firm, clear hand, the little sentence you noticed to-day when you were in my schoolroom: 'Je vous cesse de boire vin qui dévore la civilisation.' Turning to the children, he said:

"'Good-by, my little ones. That is my last lesson. Study it well and never forget it.'

"Paul's trial, in camera, was swift and brief. We learned afterwards that he made no excuses or exonerations, contending himself merely with the explanation that he would not fight, and that when he had found the promise of a clerical position unfilled he had left the army and returned to his profession. He was found guilty of cowardice and desertion in the face of the enemy and condemned to be shot. He was to be shot, but that day deserted his friends, the most loved thing known to man.'

"The old schoolmaster's voice broke into a husky whisper. He rose to his feet and leaned his head back against the wall.

"We passed a big white building sitting back from the road. Servants at the gate and soldiers motorists within the enclosure suggested a barracks or headquarters. A little way beyond, the town merged into the open country. On the left the white stone wall of a hillside cemetery met the road. The little graveyard was built in terraces up the steepest part of the hill.

"A narrow strip of grass separated the wall from the road. Here my guide paused and looked back. I saw, close against the wall, a low mound marked by a plain wooden cross. A faded wreath of wild flowers lay on the rough sod. There was no inscription on the cross to tell whose grave it was. I lay against the wall, and motioned to the enclosure reserved for more worthy clay.

"Removing his hat, the old man raised his burning eyes to mine and spoke at last, huskily and tremblingly:

"'You do not need to be told, Monsieur, what lies here. Observe. This dog this grave clings to the wall. See, here is where he was made to stand, the yarning pit of his own grave at his feet. They laid eight rifle sets through the road. Four were loaded with bullet cartridges, four with blank. Eight soldiers were fitted with the gun, whom had ever shot anything more important than a hare, took up the rifles. Than beneath that popular, Paul embroiled me in farewell. His last words were:

"'Some day France will know that I died, not as a traitor or coward, but in protest against tyranny and evil, and for my faith in the future regeneration of mankind.'

"'At his request they did not blindfold him or bind his hands. He faced them, Monsieur, with head held high, eyes shining.

"'The young lieutenant, formerly a provision merchant, filled the commandant. As he reached the fatal word, 'Fire!' I turned away my head. The volley was ragged, scattering. I felt as though I had been pierced with a thousand bayonets. When last I could hear to raise my head, the firing squad was marching away. Two other soldiers were filling the grave.'

"'I forced my steps back to this spot and watched the man finish their work. One of them produced from his narrow this little cross. There was a dispute:

"'He should not have a cross. He was a traitor, a deserter, a coward! cried one.

"'Deserter and traitor, maybe,' said the other, 'but coward, no. He was no man dies who is afraid. I say he should have the cross.'

"'The cross was placed. Since then I have come every Sunday with a little wreath of simple blossoms. The townsfolk humour me, knowing my attachment. But to some—Paul's name still stands for all that is cowardly and treacherous. I wonder will it ever be otherwise? Will they ever understand?"

"'And you, Monsieur, what say you? Was this man a traitor—a fool—or a martyr?'"
Tyranny Triumphant.

At last our rulers have fastened Compulsory Military Service on the people. They have worked long and patiently, and now have achieved their aim. We shall be told it is only for the single men, but in the present dastardly temper of the people we know that if the war continues the married men will also be conscripted. It is no good boasting about the bush, let us face the facts boldly. In the struggle between the people and their rulers, the people have been badly beaten. The whole of the forces of modern capitalist society—the State, the Church, and the Press—have been mobilized against them, and, handicapped by their ignorance, it would have been surprising if the people had not succumbed. The tactics of their enemies were aimed at dividing their ranks, and as they did not understand the game that was being played, these tactics were successful. Instead of showing a united front, the married men allowed themselves to be played off against the single ones, in the belief, which was carefully fostered, that if all the single men were squeezed into the Army, the married men would not be called up. As a writer put it in a weekly paper, the married men were made to think that by atoning they would be getting out of the trenches and not into them. Now they find they have been humbugged and trapped. But theircredibility has no limits, and the older men still hope to save themselves by agreeing to conscription for the young married men.

What these people do not understand is that Conscription for all men was definitely aimed at from the beginning; but if that had been publicly stated, the opposition would have been too strong. So the Government moved cautiously step by step, the Press playing the game, by creating an atmosphere suitable for the Government’s purpose. When the Registration Bill was introduced, many of us knew and said it was the prologue to Conscription; but the Government frankly denied that it was intended for that purpose, and the people accepted the Government’s denial. The result, however, has shown that it was a deliberate lie—the Registration Act was the foundation of the Military Service Act.

Conscription is the culminating point of the attack on the few liberties which the people had gained by generations of struggle against their rulers. The latter had made these concessions in times of popular revolts, but had always waited for the day when they could take them back again. The war has given them this opportunity, and since it began they have crushed freedom of the Press, free speech, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. Under the Defences of the Realm regulations, and merely by the order of what is termed the “competent military authority,” papers have been suppressed, publishers milled, and goods seized, and persons arrested and held in prison without any charge being made against them. Under the regulations, the workers have been fastened on to their work as with chains, and the few barriers their Unions had raised against their employers swept away, leaving them at their mercy. This is the direct result of the servility of the people, who, of recent years have begun to look on the State as their guardian angel, anxious to do things for their welfare.

Shakespeare sums up the situation very nicely in “Julius Caesar,” where he makes Cæcilius say:—

“...and why should Caesar be a tyrant then? Poor man! I know, he would not, he will not, be a wolf. But that he may, the Human Wolf, the Human Wolf, be a sheep.”

As long as the people act in the servile manner they do, there is little hope of a change. When the war is over, and they begin to realize how they have been tricked in and their best interests not served, they may rise in anger. Then, in vain will they simply put fresh rulers in the place of their old ones. It is our task, as Anarchists, to break down their faith in the State and all forms of government. It will be a heavy task, and we shall have to face bitter persecution and opposition from the privileged classes, and even from the people themselves; but it will have to be faced, and in our fight we shall many more than ever there were before. As will be seen by those who have been opened by this terrible war. Let us, then, prepare for this fight, and let our ideas be put forward clearly, unflinchingly, and without compromise. To struggle is to live, and the joy of the struggle will be sufficient reward.

THE GOVERNMENT AND IRELAND.

The unwillingness of the Government to apply the Registration Act and the Military Service Act to Ireland has caused much comment in the Press, and many have been the reasons suggested why this is their action. The Irish Trade Unions, as an organization, are loyal to the British Government, which they have always regarded as an alien Government. But if the Government have not applied the screw directly, indirectly they have left no stone unturned to achieve their purpose. Their principal weapon has been to pass the Conscription Bill, and this has been poured out like water to corrupt those whose influence was required. The Workers’ Republic, the fighting branch of the Irish Trade Unions, as it was called in February 6, has an article dealing with this question, and speaks out very plainly. The writer says that “to the property classes” “Empire” meant high dividends and financial security, whereas to the working class that meant only the things it was in rebellion against. But of recent years the tides of self-interest binding certain classes and individuals to the Empire have spread to a most astonishing degree,” under its ravishing of the small island, like the spread of a foul disease.” The writer goes on to say:—

“It would be almost impossible to name a single class or section of the population not entirely aided by this social, political, and moral leprosy.

“Beginning with our Parliamentary representatives, we see men so poisoned by the evil association of Parliament and embezzled with the belief by the unwonted luxury of a salary much greater than they could ever hope to enjoy in private life, that they have instantly and completely abandoned all the traditions of their political party and become the mouthpieces and executors of an Imperial system their greatest leaders had never ceased to hold up to the scorn of the world.

“We see the ties of self-interest so poisoning those men that they become the least stalwart and enemies of all who stand for that unfettered Ireland to which they also once pledged their heartiest allegiance. For the sake of £400 a year they become Imperialists; for the sake of large travelling expenses and luxurious living they become lying recruiters.

“Corporation after corporation elected to administer our towns and cities neglect their proper business, and make their city halls and town halls the scene of attempts to stampede the youth and manhood of Ireland out of the country to die in mercenary deaths in foreign fields.

“There is nobody in a representative position so mean that the British Government will not pay some price for his Irish soul. Newspaper men sell their Irish souls for Government advertisements paid for at a lavish rate, professors sell their souls for salaries and expenses, clergymen sell theirs for jobs for their relatives, business men sell their souls and become recruiters. The workers in government offices lose their jobs because they are short of the grades of Government officials. In all the grades of Irish society the only section that has not furnished even one apostate to the cause it had worked for in time of peace is that of the much hated and treasured militant Labour leaders.

“But if the militant Labour leaders of Ireland have not apostatised, the same cannot be said of the working class as a
whole. It is with shame and sorrow we say it, but the evil influence upon large sections of the Irish working class of the bribe and promises of the enemy cannot be denied. . . .

The Clyde Workers.

The workers on the Clyde are still in the fight. During the past month the Worker, the organ of the Clyde Workers’ Committee, has been suppressed and three of the leading spirits arrested. Also John McLean, the ex-schoolmaster, who has already been imprisoned under the Defence of the Realm Act, has been found guilty upon a charge of libel, and for his opinions alone. He was withheld upon the charge of libel, and for his opinions alone. He was put to the test of the court. It is known that the German Government were willing to help Carson and his gang just to the outbreak of the war, and Irish workers know that Carson is one of their bitterest enemies. Let the Irish workers avoid Governments at all costs.

A Warning from the Past.

“Arbitrary power has seldom or never been introduced into any country at once. It must be introduced by slow degrees, and as it were step by step, lest the people should see its approach. The barriers and fences of the people’s liberty must be placed one by one, and some plausible pretences must be found for removing or hoarding one after another, those centres where the people hold their country for warning the people of their danger. When those preparatory steps are once made, the people may then indeed, with regret, see slavery and arbitrary power making strides over their lands; but it will be too late to think of preventing or availing the impending ruin.”

Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773).

RESISTING REGISTRATION.

At the Hall Police Court on February 21 Alfred Kissoon, joiner, married, was brought up in custody on a charge of refusing to fill up a Registration Paper under the Registration Act. He had made the following statement on his form:—

“1 refuse to give you any information. I do not believe in obeying my fellow men and woman who have made the Irish workers miserable for their husbands and to enter the entreaties to join the British Army. For the sake of a few pittance shillings separation allowance thousands of Irish women have married, and the Irish women in full knowledge of the hopes of Nationalists Ireland had enlisted in the Army that England keeps here to slaughter Irish patriots.

“For what is the reason for the presence of the English army in this country? The sole reason for the presence of such soldiers in Dublin, Ireland, is that they may be used to cut the throats of Irish men and women should we dare demand for Ireland what the British Government is pretending to fight for in Belgium.

“The British Government stands in the market places and streets of Ireland buying, buying, buying the souls of the men and women, the boys and the girls, whom ambition, or greed, or passion, or vice, or poverty, or ignorance makes weak enough to listen to its seductions.

“It is refreshing to read such rebellious outspokenness nowadays, when the workers of these islands are pouring out their blood to protect the interests of their rulers, who in times of “peace” have robbed and exploited them, and used them as their tools in time of war. We regret, however, that the Workers’ Republic should print articles glorifying the German Government’s organisation. There is no need for the workers in any Government, and if the Irish look for German help to gain their freedom from the British Government, we would remind them of the fable of the horse who sought the aid of man against a wild bear. When the man, mounted on the horse’s back, had killed the bear, he said to the horse, “I am glad that I gave assistance at your entreaties, for I have captured a prey, and have learned how majestically you are,” and so conveyed him, unwilling as he was, to submit to the rein. It is known that the German Government were willing to help Carson and his gang just to the outbreak of the war, and Irish workers know that Carson is one of their bitterest enemies. Let the Irish workers avoid Governments at all costs.

The defendant was summoned on the same charge on February 4, but he failed to appear, and was arrested under warrant.

The Magistrate pressed the defendant to comply with the Act and thus avoid any further trouble. Other people were complying with the law, and it was simply stupid to refuse.

Kissoon made a lengthy speech in defence of his action. Ever since he had begun to think, he said, he had come to the conclusion that all was not right in this country, and he had gradually evolved the idea that the law of the country was not just, but that it acquires in a system of robbery of the vast majority of the people. The law was based on coercion, and when he received the summons to appear before the court he asked himself why should he be, a freedom-born Englishman, fill in forms for people in whom he had no faith, and who did not believe in freedom; for men who did not believe in justice and the principles of righteousness, and who thought more of life itself than life itself. Although it was explained that the Registration Act was not intended to be made use of for military purposes, he foresaw that it was so intended, and later events had proved that he was right. People said we must comply with law and order, but he had come to the conclusion that there were two kinds of law and order. There was the law and order based on coercion, which produced absolutely nothing, and there was the law and order based upon individual character and conscience, the result of teaching that was higher than man-made law, and was the fruit of religious conviction. He had decided that he could only submit to that form of law which is based upon righteousness, truth, and justice.

Kissoon further stated that as a result of proceedings such as were now being adopted in this country, the vast majority of the German working people, who believed in international solidarity, had been stumped into war. They had been reduced to the level of automatons, machines disciplined to do the bidding of other men without thinking for themselves, and this Registration Act was the first step towards a similar state of things in this country was, moreover, backed up by a stoppage of work in more than one munition centre, and McLean was handed over by the military authorities to the civil authorities, who released him upon £100 bond, which was paid by the workers. This is good and inspiring, as showing the spirit actuating the Clyde workers. The spirit of revolt is growing there, and we hope it will be directed towards the ultimate gaining of liberty by all the workers.

Kissoon refused to pay the fine, and was therefore committed to prison for 25 days.

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The Bridge Builders.

March 2, day of ill omen to all liberty-lovers, is now with us. The war has increased its truths and dangers; and those whose voices have been raised in defence of freedom. The dawn of this sinister day has meant little or nothing to the great mass of the people, whose lack of imagination prevented them grasping the meaning of the military service act. They do not see that we have lost something that cannot be regained without actual revolution. They cannot grasp the objectiveness of a man taking up arms against resistance, and, rather than refuse to obey a law which should outrage every moral fibre of his being, passively allow himself to be marched around for the purpose of enforcing a ritual meant for the murder of a brother man. So much easier this, the surrendering of his will to some uptight bully in authority, the donning of the King's uniform—fit emblem of humanism—lengh night in the trenches, the discomforts, the uncertainties, suspense, and risk all these things count for little to the Anglo-Saxon, whose respect for law and authority has become a hundred times greater, and whose vastness over the remotest of us, freedom, here do the forces of reaction make holiday and our victory into its baptism. This principle, which sees at last will come the real fight to be fought—the line of least resistance will serve no longer; freedom must be reconquered and marched regained. Disobedience must then become the highest duty of each, as the laws that bind us as with bands of steel be defied and broken.

To Anarchists, who have always insisted upon the immortality of all law, the period through which we are passing is one of unbroken tragedy. But they have seen in the past the almost unheeded encroachment upon our liberties, and knew that when the Government felt itself strong enough the new laws that bind us as with bands of steel be defied and broken.

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what I feel; I hope so, and I hope you on your side of the sea will put up a sturdy fight against the militarism which Roosevelt and others are desirous of sadding on your backs. You realize what it means in Europe? For freedom's sake keep the States free of it. All luck,—Yours.

W. T. S.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PREVENTION OF WARS.

(To the Editor of Freedom.)

DEAR SIR,—In the February issue of Freedom, friend John Tamlyn, in his excellent article ("Will Science Abolish War?") asserts that as long as exploitation lies at the base there can be no peace. In other words, the only way to prevent wars is to stop exploitation. Perhaps you will allow me a little space to discuss this.

I am in agreement with Mr. Tamlyn as to the root cause of modern warfare—i.e. (as he says) exploitation. The present-day inflation of armaments can only exist because the result of labour, beyond a pitance for the labourer, is diverted into the pockets of those who already have more than they can spend. The resultant "savings" are lent to Governments (at a percentage—obtained again from labour!) who devise them in the main to the building of navies and the maintenance of armis. The hoglessness of modern fighting machines is thus seen to be due to exploitation (no one would contend that taxation of the rich provides the means).

Further, the lack of purchasing power, from which the workers suffer, renders it unpredictable for more than a certain amount of the above-mentioned "savings" to be used as capital at home. Interest would not be the ruling rate, and the surplus thus saved goes to the financing of syndicates, whose purpose is to obtain control in one or more of the "matters" licenses of which permit of profit. The scramble for the exploitation of these markets and the rivalry engendered thereby result in international disputes and the growth of militarism and armaments, with war always hovering around.

Thus exploitation of labour at home produces the root motive for modern wars, at the same time providing the huge machines used to wage the wars.

Nevertheless I disagree with friend Tamlyn's assertion that peace cannot be till exploitation disappears. Desirable as the abolition of our present economic system may be, I am of opinion that at the present juncture we can gain most by uniting to secure democratic control of foreign policy by warring over the best way to crush the capitalist. War and militarism are the common food of all who aim at human well-being. These facts prove almost all goodwill to be valueless if we cannot unite to crush further our road.

Popular control of foreign policy means the abolition of secrecy in our diplomacy. The economic grip on foreign affairs will be impossible when the people secure control. Only under the veil of secrecy dare the financiers carry out their schemes. This war—this "last experiment"—has shown us the evils of secret class diplomacy with its lack of effective interest in popular ideals.

I do not ask any peace secrecy publicly and abolish the grip of the cliques, and we shall be in a fair way towards an ending—if not a permanent—peace. With the Governments impoverished and the people thus roused we shall have a large part of the fight in which to fight for freedom and well-being.

On the other hand, if we ignore the diplomatic causes of war, we shall fail to overthrow the economic enemy, as we are too divided in our economic aims to achieve much, and meantime "clique control" of the republican machines will be increased.

Even when a national economic system is attained it will be desirable to hold inter-communal and international conferences; and the democratization of foreign policy will, besides rendering the economic causes of war impotent, help to pave the way towards these future world conferences.

A real point is that all reformers and revolutionaries should unite at the present critical time in order to render it impossible in future for the economic causes of war to operate through diplomacy. While this object is attained, and all the other brands of revolution and reform will be free to fight each other besides the Conservatives, till in the end between them they succeed in crushing the capitalist. —Yours, etc.

CHARLES D. KING.

"Democrat control of foreign policy" is a will-o'-the-wisp, like democracy control of other things. Foreign policy is simply concerned with sharing in the exploitation of other races. We wish to abolish exploitation at home and abroad, not to "control" it, whether democratically or otherwise.—Ed. Freedom.

A SUGGESTION FROM AMERICA.

(To the Editor of Freedom.)

DEAR COMRADE,—Greeting.—My dear old comrades at Home Colony, Washington, send me your paper, Freedom, and many others, which I pursue with much interest. This time times those fearful as anarchist. How beautifully our diagnosis of affairs is being vindicated the world over!

I am writing for the purpose of making a suggestion, which I hope may bear fruit. But before giving you the details, I shall tell you (in a few words) how we made the idea work here in Lincoln in connection with another movement.

Several weeks ago, the famous evangelist Billy Sunday spent some seven weeks preaching in Nebraska. You know what it means in Europe? For freedom's sake keep the States free of it. All luck,—Yours.

W. T. S.

The Fox Without a Tail.

"The keynote of recruiting agents is the wounded soldiers from the Front—especially those who have lost a limb."—Daily Paper. This phenomenon has been aptly explained by Keep in his well-known book, "The Fox Without a Tail."—"Daily Paper.

A Fox being caught in a trap, was glad to compound for his score by leaving his tail behind him; but upon coming abroad into the world, he began to be so sensible of the disgrace such a defect would bring upon him, that he almost wished he had died rather than come away without it. However, resolving to make the best of a bad matter, he called a meeting of the rest of the Foxes, and proposed that they should follow his example. "You have no notion," said he, "of the ease and comfort with which I now move about: I could never have believed it if I had not tried it myself; but really, when one comes to reason upon it, a tail is such an ugly, inconvenient, unnecessary appendage, that the only wonder is that, as Foxes, we could have put up with it so long. I propose, therefore, my worthy brethren, that you all profit by the experience that I am most willing to afford you, and that all Foxes from this day forward cut off their tails." Upon this one of the eldest stepped forward, and said, "I rather think, my friend, that you would not have advised us to part with our tails, if there were any chance of recovering your own."

"Preparing Class 1936." Last summer the following note appeared in the official French Parliamentary Journal, the Journal Officiel:—

"M. Giraud demanded from the Minister of War what had been done with the information referred to the suspension of the Class 1936, and whether the systems of permission suitable for our soldiers shown in it shall soon be put into practice." M. Milleraud, the Minister of War, answered that "permissions were immediately to be issued."

To the unlimited, who do not know what the Class 1936 is, the Frenchman and answer will convey nothing. Class 1936 is the children to be born this year, and who will consequently be 20 years old in 1936, and thus liable for military training; and the "permissions" are to enable the French soldiers to visit their houses and their wives and sweethearts to prepare this Class. This is another of those "military necessities" that we hear so much of nowadays. Not much of the "glamour of love" in this.—British Columbian Federationists.

"What Are We Fighting For?" "What are we fighting for, if we are to jettison all our liberties one by one; first, the freedom of the Press; then the freedom of the common man, then open Competition by competition of news and opinions by a Government that never appreciates the blessed light of publicity? If we are getting rid of all these liberties one by one, I do not know for what we are fighting. I thought the whole object of this war was to preserve those liberties. I ask, is it for this we are sacrificing the flower of England's manhood? Is it for this we are expending the nation's resources, the comforts of her people, and the garnered products of her industry? I want to know how much better off we should be, even if we want to go to war, if we Germanize our institutions? What shall it profit us if in our gain the whole victory and lose the price? we are fighting for?"—Sr W. Byles, M.P., in House of Commons.
INTERNATIONAL MODERN SCHOOL.

With further reference to our note in last month’s FREEDOM we are now able to furnish our being compelled to relinquish Ashburn House, we are now able to furnish. February’s financial account for the benefit of sympathizing comrades and those scholars who failed to attend our last gathering.

February’s income: School, 12s. 8d.; Ernest Humphreys, 6d.; Special Donation, 1s. 6d.; per W. Kedward, 1s. 6d. It was decided by the School to hand over the balance, after paying liabilities, to the Anti-Conscription League—£1. Is. 10d. This has been done. JH.

PROPOSED COMMUNIST COLONY.

There is little to report concerning the proposed Communist Colony. A farm has been offered at a fair rental, but the condition of the roads has prevented us from visiting it. Progress will be reported later. Can any reader supply information about any literary dealing with Communist Colonies?

H. BAXE.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(Febuary—March 2.)

FREEDOM GIFT FUND.—A. Matthews 6s. 8d., E. Wallis 6d., Ellis 10s., D. Cameron 2s. 6d., E. Humphreys 6d., J. Balchin 6d., W. S. Sellick 3s. 6d., E. Williams 1s., T. S. 6d., J. Pye 6d., Street House (second and sale of secondments and subscriptions, work ending January 30th, 1654; February 7, 6s. 8d.; February 12, 1s. 4d.; February 19, 1s. 6d.; February 26, 4s. 5d.; membership subscription (February), 1s. 6d.

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March House.

Thursday, March 9—Discussion, “That Capital is not International”; speaker, S. Oror.

Saturday, March 11—Gramophone Concert. Dancing as usual.


Thursday, March 21—Discussion.

Every Sunday, Social and Dance, 8 p.m.—Collection.

The Literary and the Pamphlet Fund.

In future the books in the March House Library may be borrowed on Sunday evenings on payment of 1/4 per volume. Librarian: R. Michaels. The proceeds will go towards the reprinting of pamphlets. Presents of suitable books will be much appreciated.

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